



THE HOMERIC HYMN TO DIONYSUS

DRAWINGS
GLYNNIS FAWKES

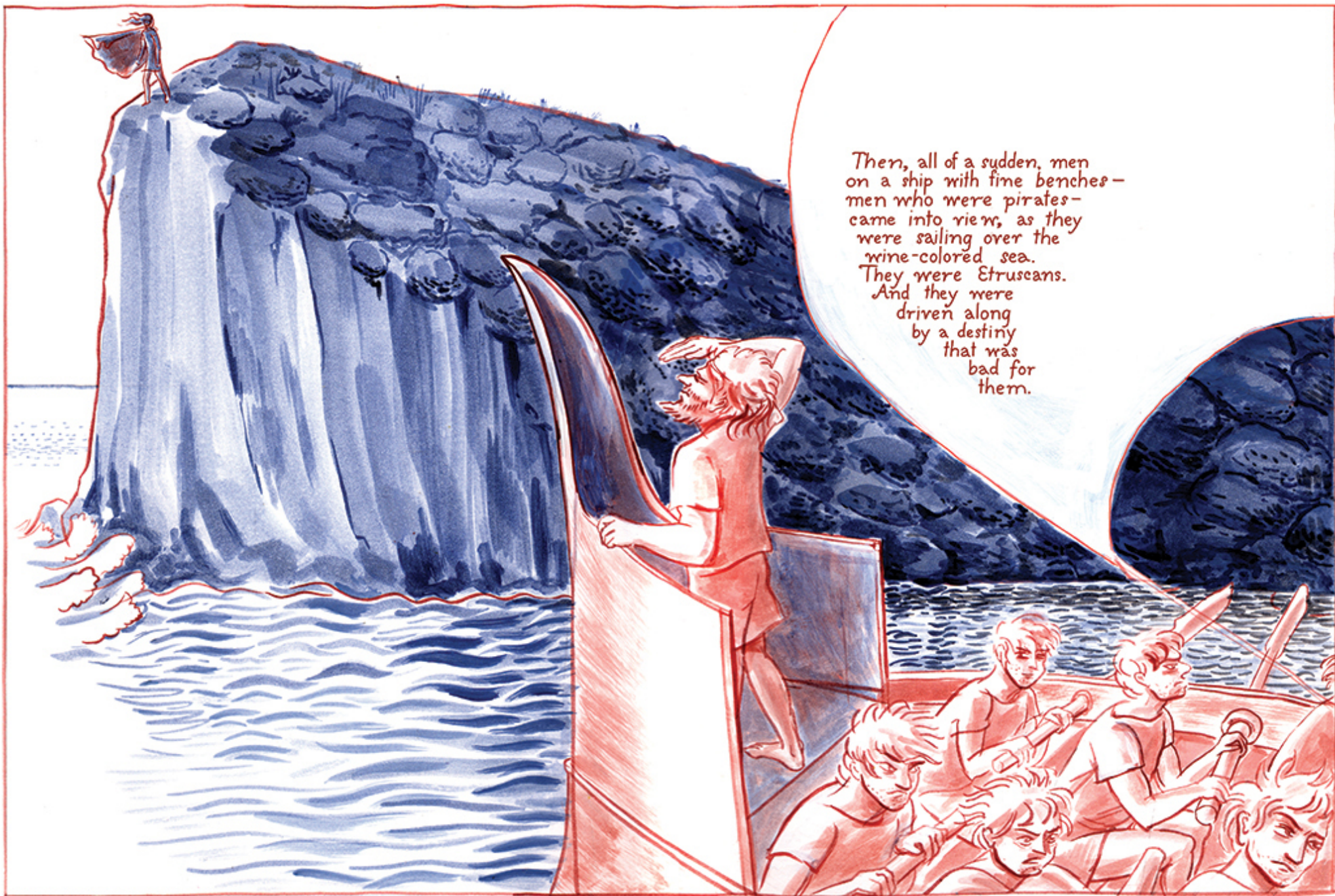
TRANSLATION
GREGORY NAGY



About Dionysus
son of most glorious
Semele my mind
will connect, how
it was that he made
an appearance
on a prominent
headland, looking
like a young man
at the beginning
of adolescence.

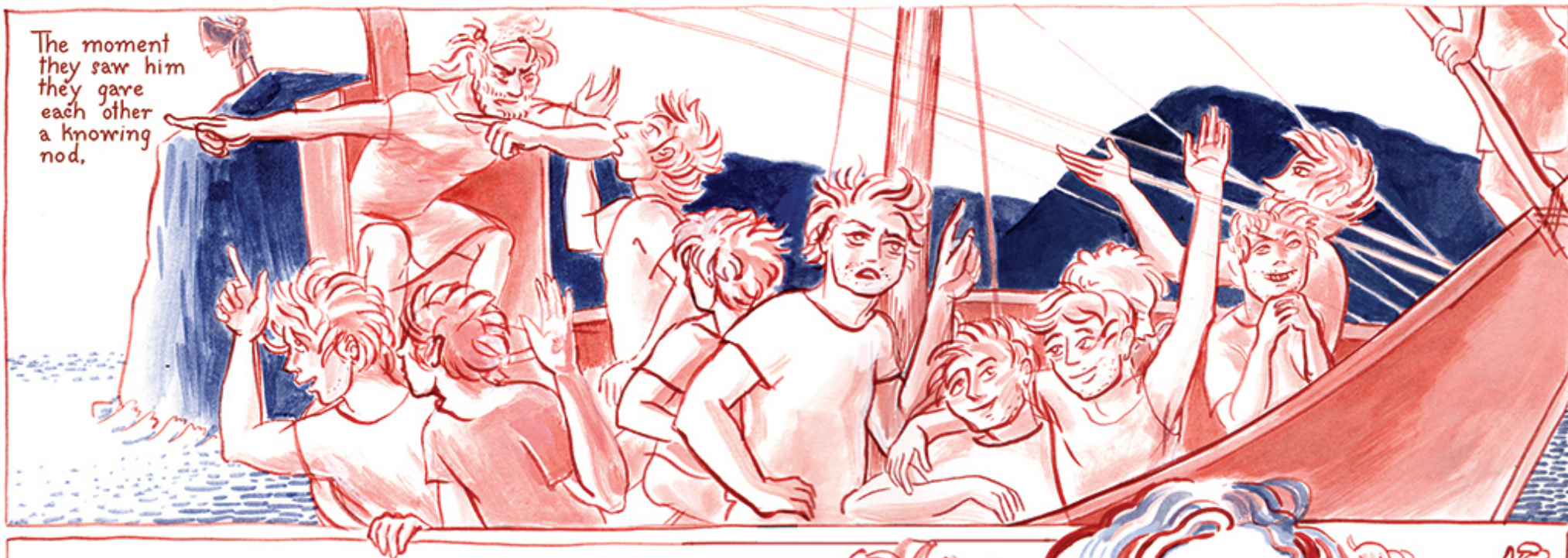


Beautiful were the locks of hair as they waved in the breeze surrounding him. They were the color of deep blue. And a cloak he wore over his strong shoulders, the color of purple.

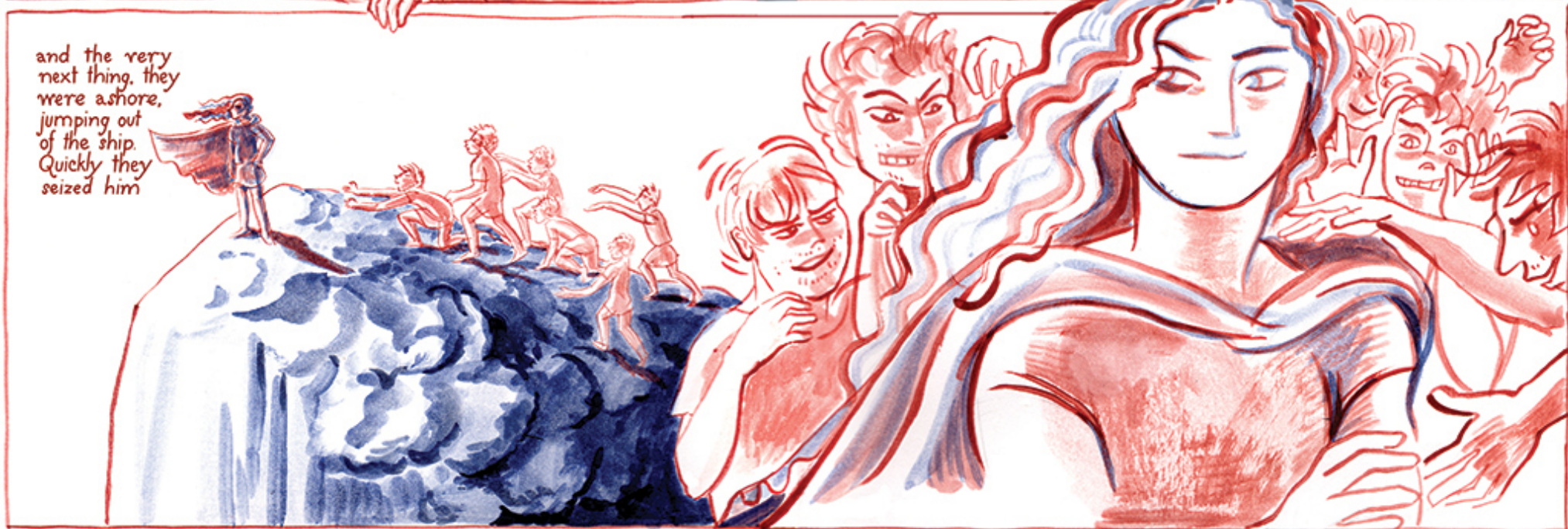


Then, all of a sudden, men
on a ship with fine benches—
men who were pirates—
came into view, as they
were sailing over the
wine-colored sea.
They were Etruscans.
And they were
driven along
by a destiny
that was
bad for
them.

The moment
they saw him
they gave
each other
a knowing
nod,



and the very
next thing, they
were ashore,
jumping out
of the ship.
Quickly they
seized him

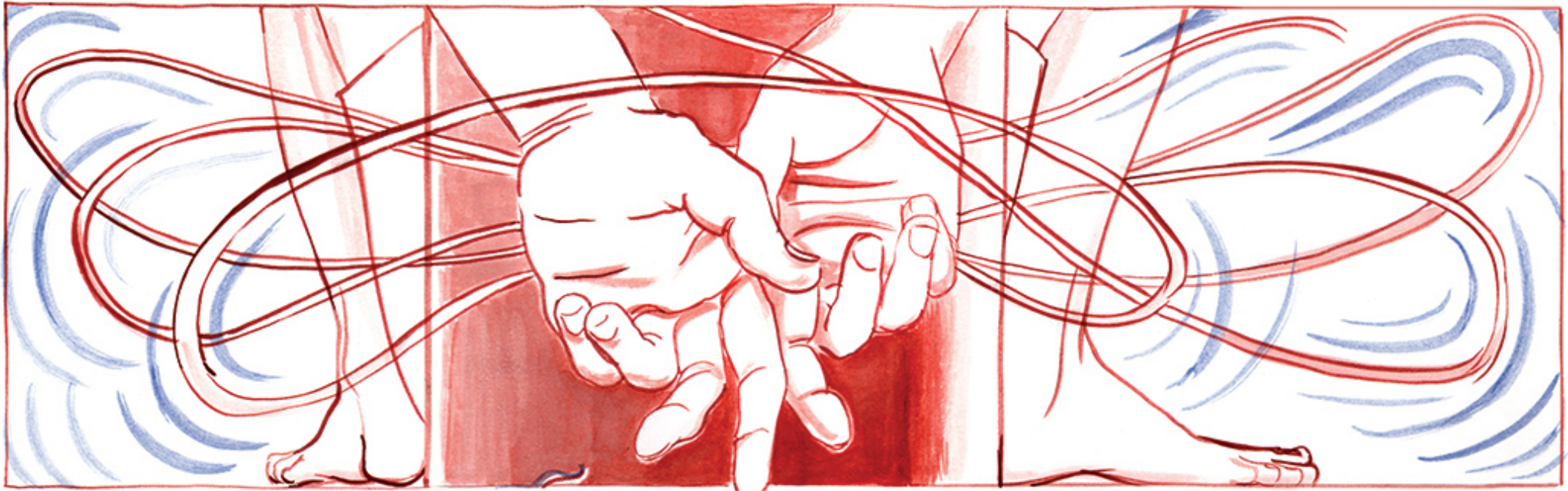


and sat him down
inside their ship,
happy in their
hearts because
they thought he
was the son of
a line of kings
nurtured by the
sky-god.

That is
what they thought
he was. And they
wanted to

Tie him up
in harsh bondage!

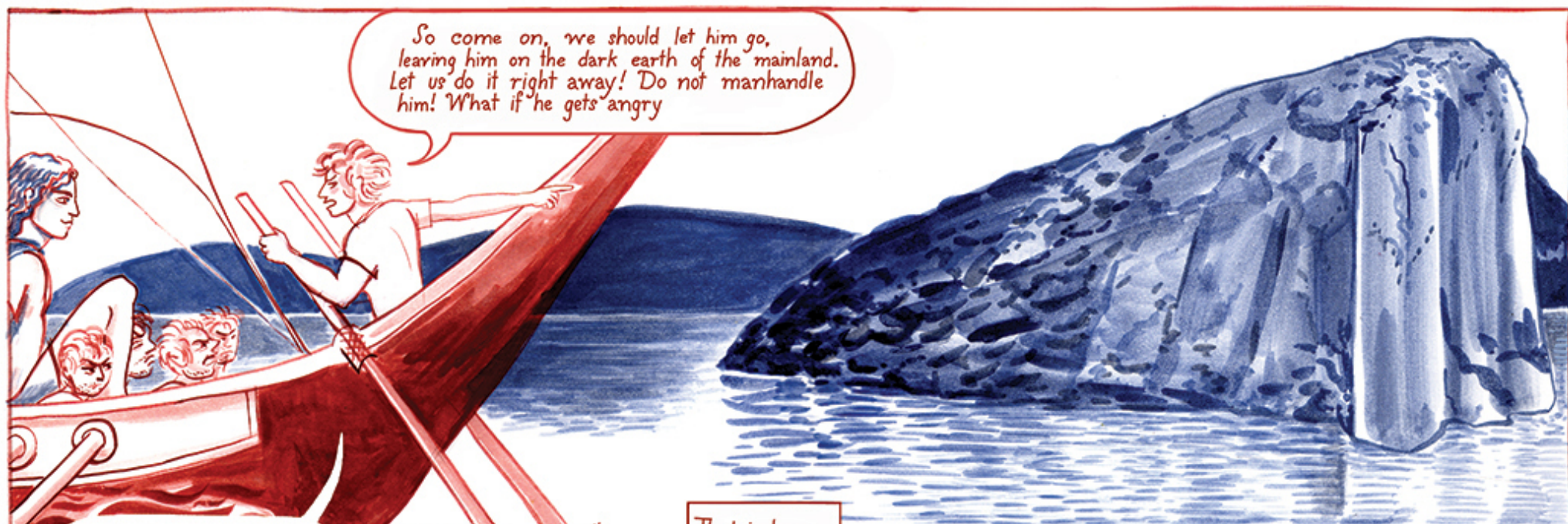




But the ties of the bonds could not hold him, the cords made of willow fell off of him, all over the place, falling right off his hands and feet.
And he just sat there, smiling, looking on with his deep blue eyes.







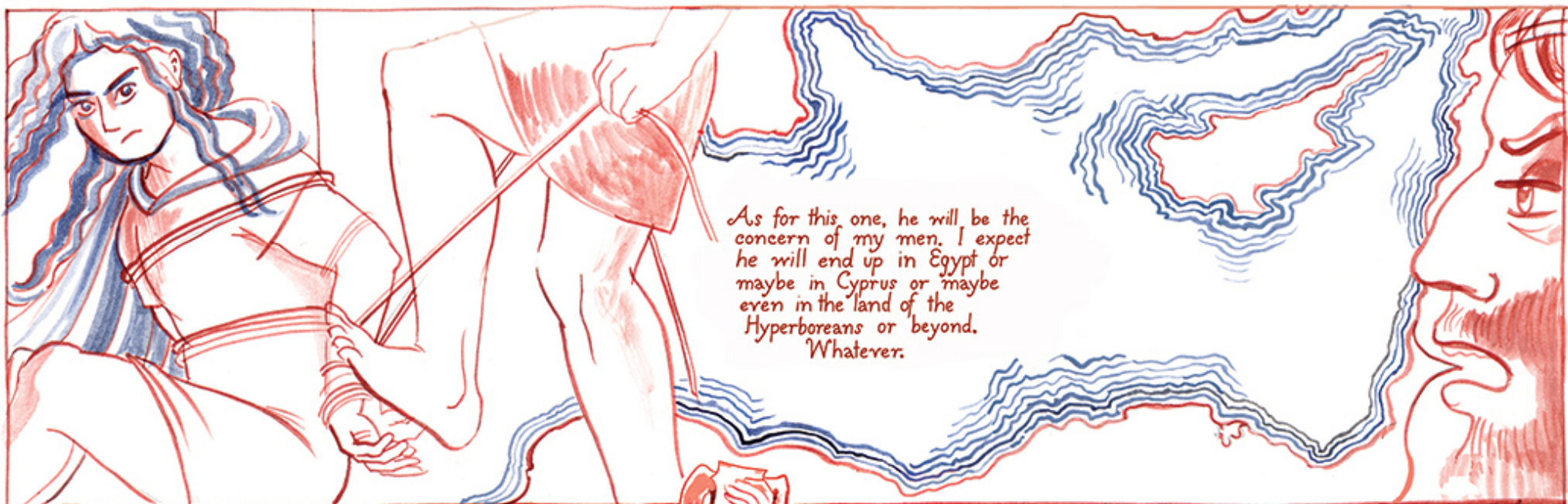
So come on, we should let him go,
leaving him on the dark earth of the mainland.
Let us do it right away! Do not manhandle
him! What if he gets angry

and stirs up winds that
will make hardship, and
a huge whirlwind?

That is how
he spoke.
But the leader
of the men
reviled him,
speaking with
hateful words:

Just watch
for the wind, start hoisting the
sail of the ship, and hold on
to all the ropes.

No, you are
the one who is
possessed by some
kind of daimōn.



As for this one, he will be the
concern of my men. I expect
he will end up in Egypt or
maybe in Cyprus or maybe
even in the land of the
Hyperboreans or beyond.
Whatever.



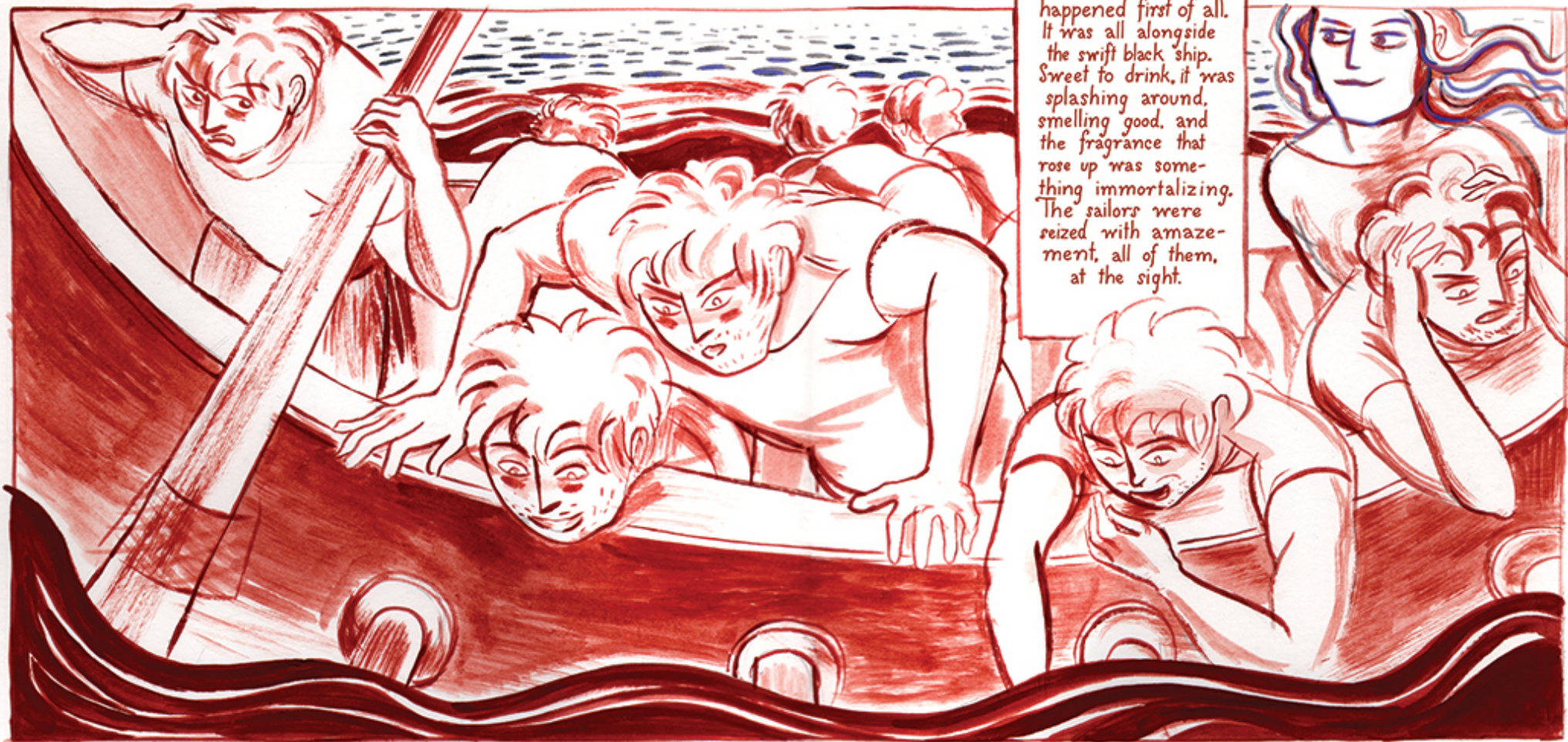
In the end,
he will tell all:
he will come around
to saying who are his
near and dear ones
and what are all the
possessions he has and
he will tell about his
siblings.

And that is because a
daimōn has put him in
our pathway.

Having said this, the leader himself started hoisting the sail of the ship. Now a wind came and blew right into the middle of the sail, and the ropes that held it at both ends got all stretched to the limit. Then, right away, there appeared to them things that would make anyone marvel.

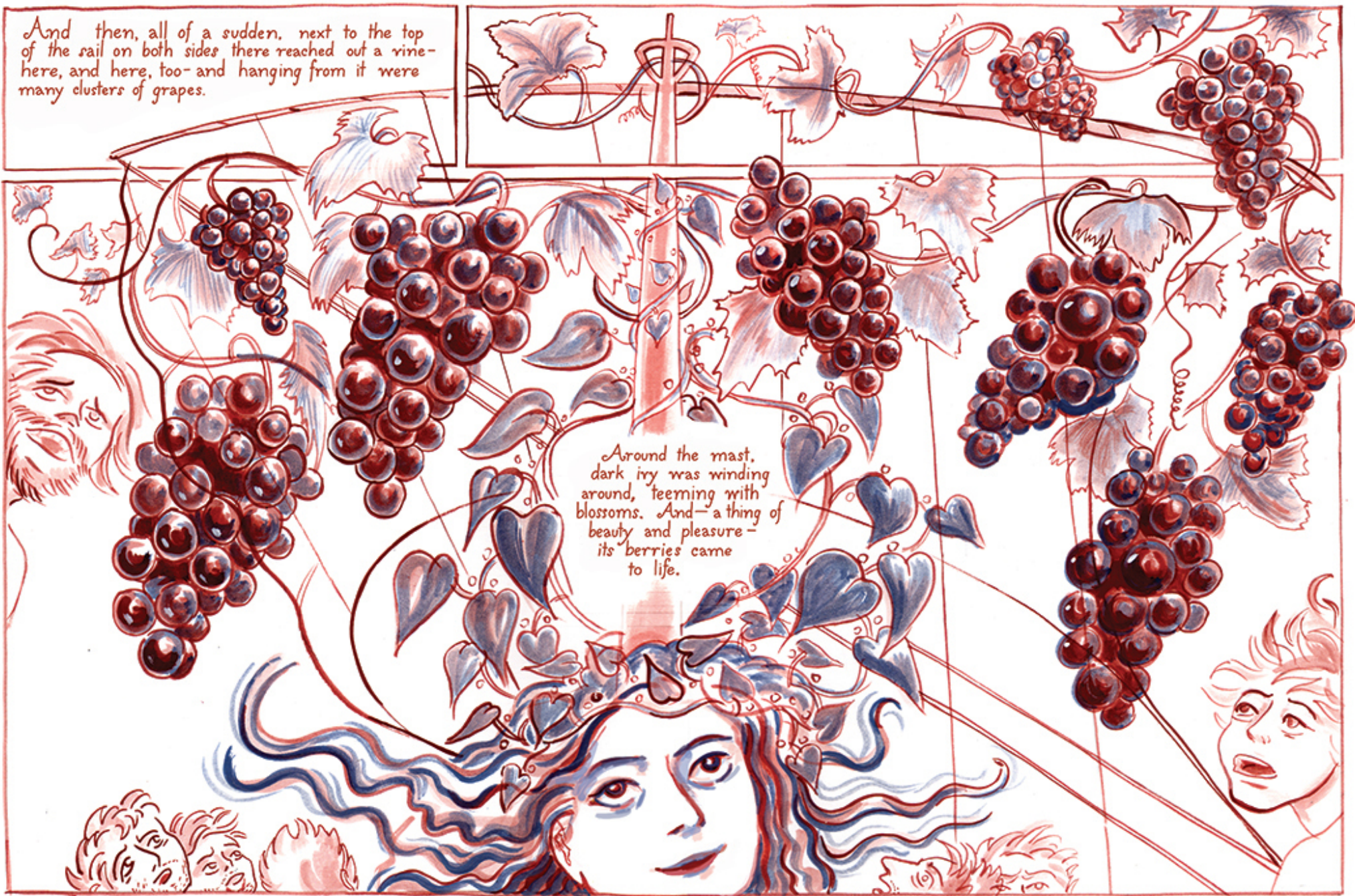


Wine. That is what happened first of all. It was all alongside the swift black ship. Sweet to drink, it was splashing around, smelling good, and the fragrance that rose up was something immortalizing. The sailors were seized with amazement, all of them, at the sight.



And then, all of a sudden, next to the top of the sail on both sides there reached out a vine—here, and here, too—and hanging from it were many clusters of grapes.

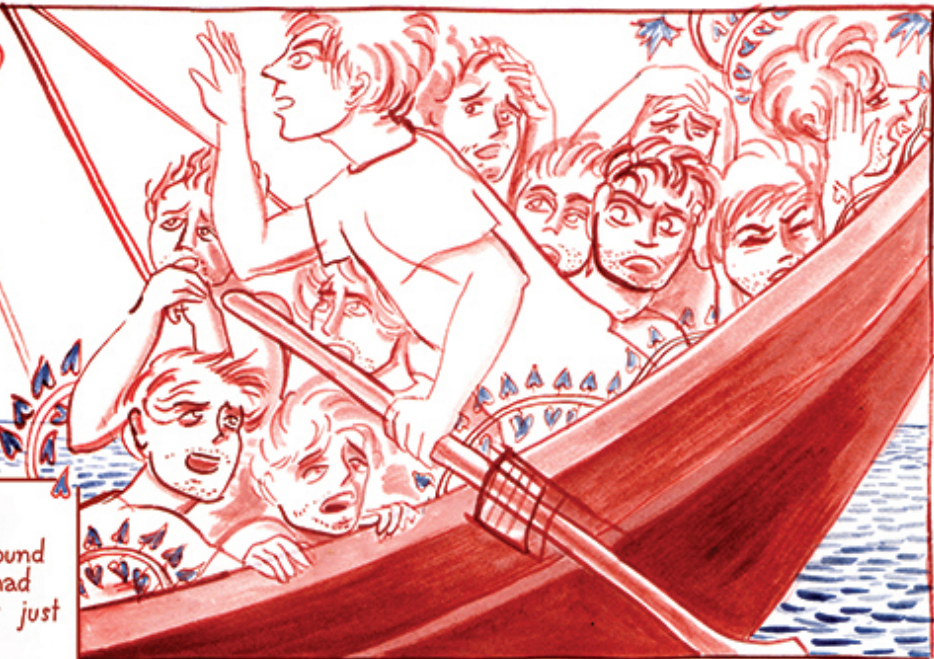
Around the mast, dark ivy was winding around, teeming with blossoms. And—a thing of beauty and pleasure—its berries came to life.







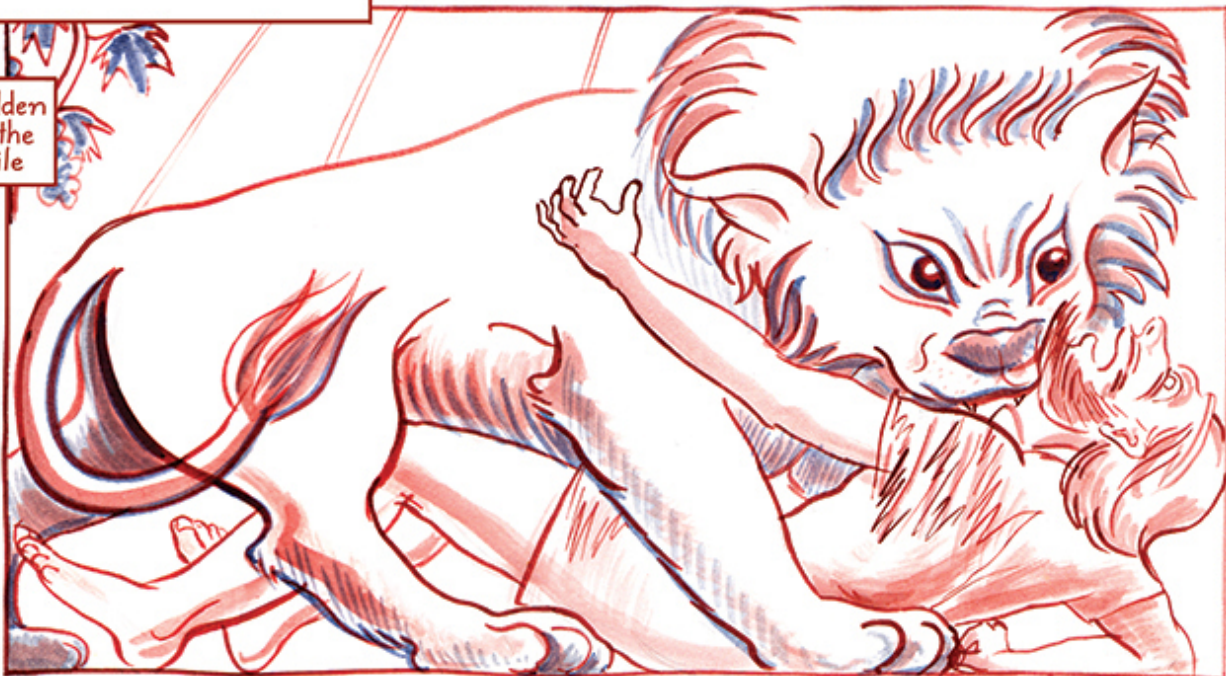
Thus he made his signals appear. The bear reared up, raging, while the lion, at the top of the deck, glared at them with its horrific looks.



The men, terrified, were fleeing toward the stern, crowding around the steersman, the one who had a mind that is moderate. They just stood there, astounded.



Then the lion all of a sudden leaped up and took hold of the leader of the men while



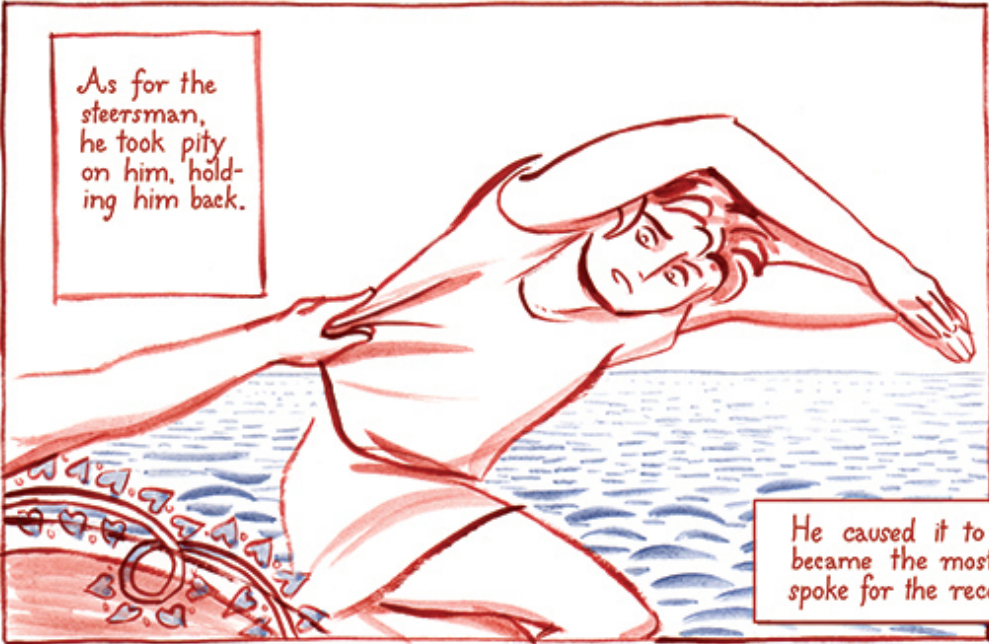


they were trying
to get out, rush-
ing away from
the bad destiny
that was theirs.
They all together
at the same time
leaped out, once
they saw what
they saw, into the
gleaming salt sea.



They became dolphins.

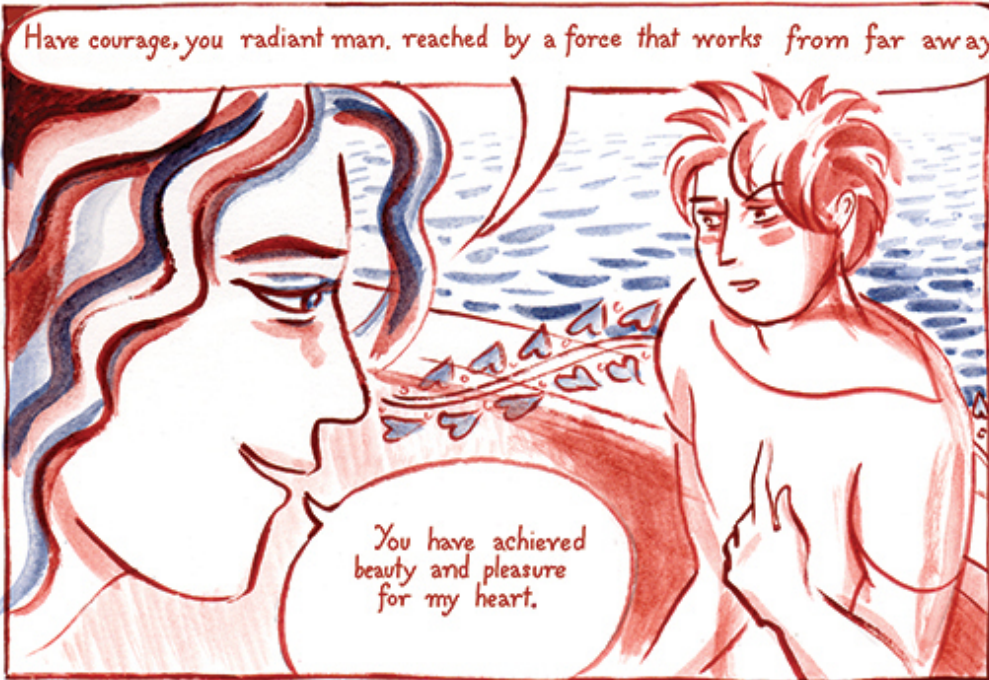




As for the
steersman,
he took pity
on him, hold-
ing him back.

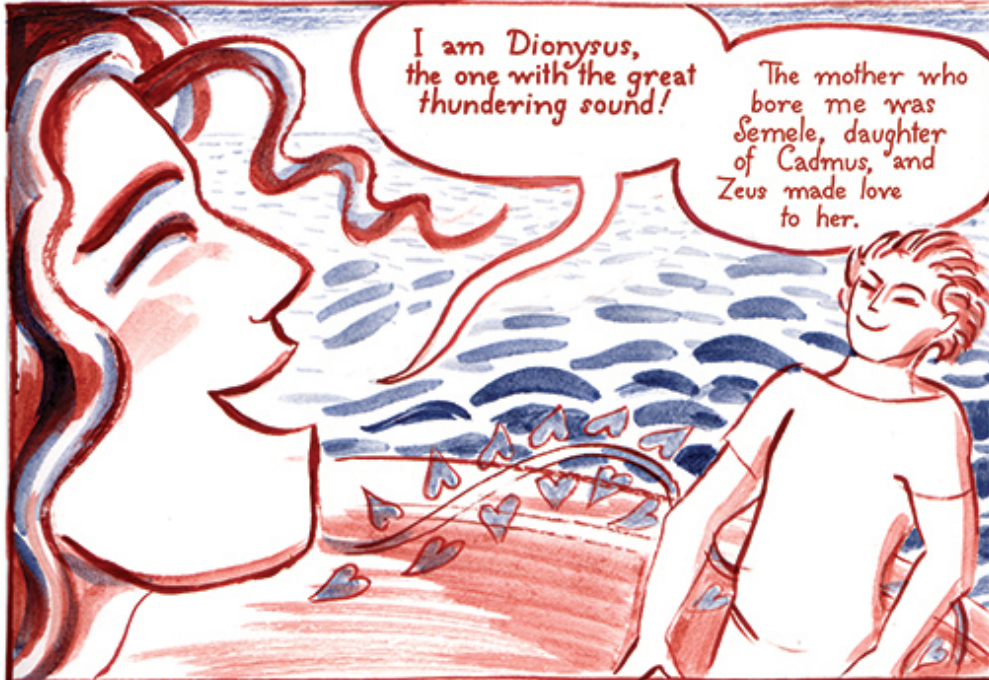


He caused it to happen that the steersman-
became the most blessed of all men, and he
spoke for the record this set of words:



Have courage, you radiant man, reached by a force that works from far away.

You have achieved
beauty and pleasure
for my heart.

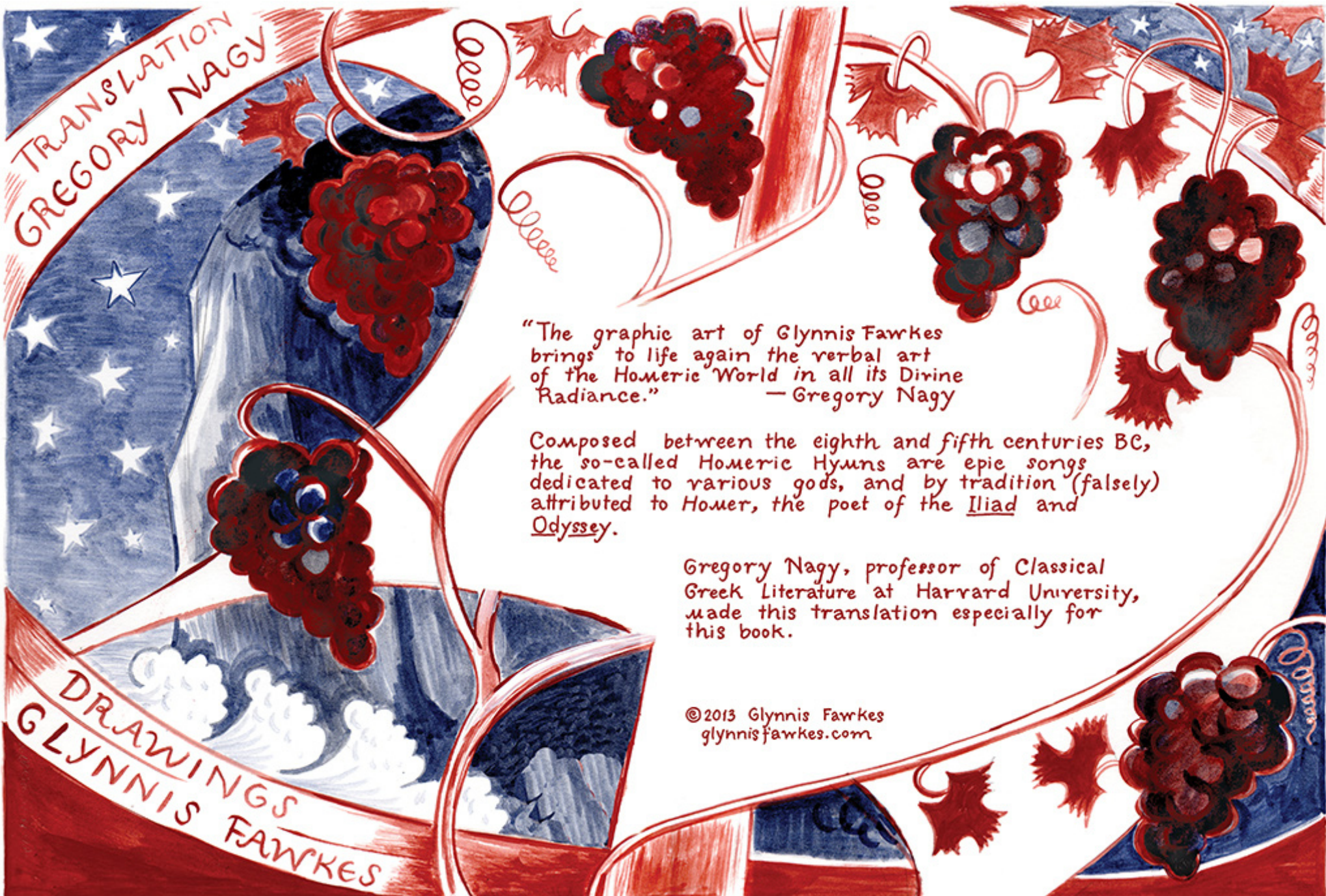


I am Dionysus,
the one with the great
thundering sound!

The mother who
bore me was
Semele, daughter
of Cadmus, and
Zeus made love
to her.







TRANSLATION
GREGORY NAGY

"The graphic art of Glynnis Fawkes
brings to life again the verbal art
of the Homeric World in all its Divine
Radiance." — Gregory Nagy

Composed between the eighth and fifth centuries BC,
the so-called Homeric Hymns are epic songs
dedicated to various gods, and by tradition (falsely)
attributed to Homer, the poet of the Iliad and
Odyssey.

Gregory Nagy, professor of Classical
Greek Literature at Harvard University,
made this translation especially for
this book.

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